

Mr. Denkins has worked for the people of Alabama in various capacities for most of his life. Over his career, he has served in the United States Army Reserves; has been the Minister of First Baptist Church of Williams in Jacksonville, Alabama; has worked as a therapist for the Calhoun-Cleburne County Mental Health Board; and worked as a Human Resource Specialist for the Westinghouse Anniston Chemical-Demilitarization Project.

Prior to joining my office in 2003, Mr. Denkins also served as an Executive Assistant for former Third District Congressman Glen Browder. From 2003 to 2007, he has served as Field Representative, Deputy District Director, and District Director and has been a dedicated and non-partisan public servant.

Lamar has done an incredible job for the people of the Third District and he will certainly be missed here in this office, and across East Alabama.

Lamar, on behalf of the citizens of Alabama's Third Congressional District, thank you for your service to our State. We wish you all the best in your retirement.

#### TRIBUTE TO HIDALGO EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

#### HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2007*

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Hidalgo Early College High School, in Hidalgo, TX, for achieving the highest ranking in the State of Texas among the Best High Schools In America by U.S. News and World Report.

Hidalgo Early College High School has consistently worked to provide crucial tools for educational success for its 810 students, more than half of whom come from families that have never finished high school, and these students have overcome tremendous barriers thanks to the leadership of their school, their parents, and teachers. One of the many tools for success the school offers is the chance to earn up to 60 college hours at no cost by the time the students reach their senior year, which gives them the opportunity to obtain both a high school diploma and associates degree upon graduation. This was made possible by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

It is also due to the strong leadership displayed by Eduardo Cancino, superintendent of Hidalgo ISD, and by Edward Blaha, principal of Hidalgo Early College High School, that the school has outperformed its peers at the local, state, and national level. I am also proud of the support for the community that the local school board and the administrators and teachers have shown for Hidalgo Early College High School. It is because of their collective effort in providing the best education possible for the students, that Hidalgo

Early College High School has rightfully earned its rank as one of the best high schools in America.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize Hidalgo Early College High School for achieving the highest ranking in the State of Texas among the Best High Schools In America by U.S. News and World Report, and I thank you for this time.

#### MARKING HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: THE PLIGHT OF AYMAN NOUR

#### HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2007*

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on Monday, December 10, the United States joins the world in celebration of Human Rights Day, remembering the historic occasion when the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document affirms the elementary rights that belong to all humankind.

Nearly six decades after the adoption of this critical Declaration, and 46 years after I joined the first Freedom Rides to uphold civil and human rights for all citizens of the United States, there are still many people around the globe struggling to gain the rights that we as Americans hold dear.

The plight of one man, Ayman Nour, is emblematic of the myriad injustices that continue to afflict our fellow citizens of the world today. Nour, a parliamentarian and a leading voice for democracy in Egypt, was arrested and jailed in 2005 after his candidacy in the country's first open presidential election. He was charged with forgery, but his imprisonment is widely understood as a political move by the Egyptian government to crack down on the opposition. The illegitimate nature of the charges against him, along with Nour's serious health concerns, including heart problems and diabetes, are grounds for his immediate release. This week, however, Nour enters the third year of his 5-year sentence with little reason for optimism. His latest appeal was rejected earlier this year after the state-sponsored Egyptian media launched a smear campaign against him.

Nour is not the only victim of this crack-down. Judges, journalists, ethnic and religious minorities, civil society and human rights activists, and everyday citizens have all been targeted. Nour and countless others fighting for their fundamental freedoms continue to look to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an ideal, not as a reality. For the millions who have suffered greatly, Nour's release would symbolize a recommitment to the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as cited in the Declaration's Preamble.

On this Human Rights Day, in the spirit of cooperation between nations, I urge the Egyptian government to release Ayman Nour, and to uphold its stated commitment to civil and human rights.

#### A TRIBUTE TO JOHN SKIEF

#### HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2007*

Mr. BRADY. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor one of Philadelphia's great educators, my fellow West Philadelphian, John Skief. We lost John this past Saturday and he is deeply missed.

John Skief was a true Renaissance man. In his youth, he was a member of the All City

Dance Ensemble. He was also a gymnast, a cross-country runner, and a soccer player. He set city and state high jump records in high school and college. A born activist, Skief joined the NAACP youth council at age 14 and participated in many civil rights demonstrations under the leadership of his mentor, Cecil B. Moore.

Skief has been a constant advocate of African-American history and community control of education. After receiving his degree in education from Cheyney State College in 1971, Skief began his teaching career in the Philadelphia Public School System. He was a leader in the High School restructuring program. At West Philadelphia High School, Mr. Skief was the founder and coordinator of the Community Development Charter. He taught a 3-credit in-service course for the Philadelphia School District, entitled "African and African American Contributions to Science and Technology." He was also the Founder and Chief Administrative Officer of Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School in West Philadelphia and was the founding President of the Pennsylvania Alliance of Charter Schools.

Mr. Skief was a noted filmmaker, providing video footage of his travels throughout the Caribbean and Africa for use in classes and on television. He has written articles on education in numerous publications and continues to educate and culturally enrich African Americans. He produced community Kwanzaa Celebrations annually since 1974 and produced lectures with noted Black authors and historians. John Skief produced the African American Festival for the Robin Hood Dell East concerts and served as production manager for the Philadelphia Kwanzaa Expo and African American Parade and Festival. In 1985 he organized the Respect Yourself Youth Self-Esteem Program in Philadelphia.

Madam Speaker, John Skief is survived by his wife, Tonya, and four children, Masai, Terrell, Kimberly, and Kalima and was predeceased by another child. We will all miss him very much. I ask that all my colleagues join me in honoring him today.

#### THE PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS

#### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2007*

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, Theodore Roosevelt said: "No man is worth his salt who is not ready at all times to risk his well-being, to risk his body, to risk his life, in a great cause." The Patriot Guard Riders are a group of motorcyclists who pay tribute to those who have died serving our country. Their mission is to attend the funeral services of fallen soldiers upholding President Roosevelt's belief that brave soldiers who gave the utmost sacrifice for their country deserve respect and reverence during their final tribute.

Each mission has two objectives, to show sincere respect for America's fallen heroes, their families, and their communities; and to shield the mourning family and their friends from interruptions created by any protestor or group of protestors. In 2 short years, the Patriot Guard Riders has become a 501(c)(3) charity, comprised of more than 140,000 volunteers across the country that take off from